

South Railroad Street Park Frequently Asked Questions:

Below are responses to a series of questions posed at the July 24th Public Hearing, as well as responses to questions received during the public comment period.

What type of maintenance is planned for each Section (A-C)? What would be the frequency of maintenance?

According to John Hopkins, the Area Manager in your part of the County, local parks like South Railroad Street Park see a maintenance crew a minimum of once a week. They inspect the site for trash, vandalism, safety issues and repairs. At that time, citizens may stop by to notify Park Operations of any issues dealing with the park. The playground fall zone will be honored on site, and checked a minimum of once a year. The playground equipment will be inspected monthly. If basketball is to occur on site, the nets are inspected weekly, and if damaged or lost, replaced monthly. Trails are checked seasonally and after major storms for erosion and safety issues.

Could the court area, if not feasible to be an actual tennis court, at least include a backboard where tennis players could practice? Also could a tetherball court be included in the court or open play area?

A Master Plan typically does not go beyond the conceptual design stage. Once the Master Plan has been approved and the project moves into the detailed design stage, other play elements like the exact design of the playground will be considered. Based on community feedback, the final plan to be presented before the Park Authority Board will show a half-court with one basketball basket. The paved play area as shown in the Conceptual Development Plan can support many different kinds of games, and also leaves the space available to support more specific uses after the Master Plan has been approved.

Has this project been fully funded? If so, when is the projected start and finish date?

At this time, the South Railroad Street Park project is not funded, nor is there a timeline. However, there are opportunities for your community to aid in securing funding for the park. The Fairfax County Park Authority has the **Mastenbrook Volunteer Matching Fund**, which communities can raise money and have the Park Authority match any contributions. Applications are available through a request to Todd Johnson, the Mastenbrook Program Coordinator. He can be reached at 703.324.8594. The details of the program are as follows:

FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY MASTENBROOK VOLUNTEER MATCHING FUND GRANT PROGRAM

- WHO:** Fairfax County Park Authority
12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 927
Fairfax, Virginia 22035-1118
Contact: Todd Johnson
703-324-8594
- WHAT:** This program allows individuals or groups to request capital development funds to match volunteer group resources for projects to improve Fairfax County Park Authority parks and park facilities. The goal is to assist volunteers in improving county parks by matching their funds/in-kind services.
- WHEN:** Applications for grant funds will be accepted at any time and will end when the funds are exhausted. Funding comes from the Park Bond Program, approved by county citizens through referendum in November 1998. **Note:** Projects that were begun or completed prior to receiving Park Authority approval are not eligible for Mastenbrook Volunteer Matching Fund Grant Program funds.
- WHERE:** Projects *must take place* in a Fairfax County Park Authority park or facility
- WHY:** This matching grant fund program for volunteer projects was first suggested by John Mastenbrook during the development of the 1998 Park Bond Program. Mr. Mastenbrook, a longtime park advocate, served on the Park Authority Board for 21 years. His vision was to establish a source of funds to match volunteer funds or in-kind services in an effort to encourage public/private ventures that improved county parks.

HOW:

Park Authority staff will review each project and make recommendations to the Park Authority Board, which will make the final decision on funding. Projects will be reviewed using the following criteria:

1. Proposals *will be accepted anytime* beginning in FY 2004 and ending when the funds are exhausted.
2. Proposals *will receive* a response within 60 days of receipt. In situations where a park master plan modification is required, projects *may* be approved contingent upon final approval of the master plan.
3. Proposed projects *must address* Park Authority service needs.
4. Completed park improvement projects *must be* available to the general public.
5. Proposed project scopes and designs *must meet* all Park Authority standards and code requirements.
6. Project proposals *must demonstrate* which and how many citizens will benefit from the proposed project.
7. Matching funds *should not* exceed 50% of the total project costs.
8. The volunteer match *may be* in the form of in-kind services and/or cash.
9. The Park Authority match *will be* primarily for materials costs.
10. The target *maximum amount* of grant funding is \$10,000 per project.
11. Each individual or organization *is limited* to one approved project per fiscal

- year.
12. The Park Authority Board *must* approve all projects.
 13. An approved project must have all funding in place six months from the date of Park Authority approval, otherwise the project is cancelled and cannot be resubmitted until all funding is in place.
 14. Proposals that have not received Park Authority approval within twelve (12) months of receipt of the application will be evaluated for viability.

It is important to remember that park development does not always closely follow adoption of a park master plan process. The Park Authority Board must identify project funding sources, typically through voter-approved bonds, private developer contributions, and/or cooperative agreements with local user groups.

Public Use Approval

Virginia law, Section 15.2-2232, requires local Planning Commissions to review public facility uses to determine if their general location, character, and extent are substantially in accord with the County Comprehensive Plan. Following adoption of a park master plan, the Park Authority submits an [Application for Determination](#) or a "2232 Review" to the Planning Commission for a finding of conformance to the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission may hold its own public hearing prior to acting on the application.

Scope

When funding is secured, a project scope is developed for Park Authority Board approval. The scope identifies the facilities to be developed, areas of cultural and natural resources to be preserved, transportation and utility improvements, and federal, state, and local code requirements. The scope includes a preliminary cost estimate and schedule identifying major milestones for the design, permitting, bidding, and construction phases of the project.

Design

Once the scope is approved the project proceeds to the detailed design phase. During this phase each element of the plan such as buildings, athletic fields, playgrounds, parking lots, and trails are specifically located on a base plan. Various code requirements for buildings, site work, accessibility, wetlands, and Chesapeake Bay preservation are incorporated into the plan during this process. Following completion of the design, the plans are submitted to various agencies to obtain the permits necessary to proceed to construction.

Construction

As a public agency, the Park Authority must conduct the bidding of construction projects in accordance with the Virginia Public Procurement Act. Construction

projects must be advertised, and the resulting bid proposals opened in public. Each contract is presented to the Park Authority Board for approval. A "Pardon Our Dust" letter is mailed to citizens that live near the construction site notifying them of the impending project. The Park Authority ensures that the project is constructed in compliance with the plans, specifications, and permit requirements resulting in the issuance of an occupancy permit for the facility. Park Authority operational staff then opens each facility for the public's use.

Based on this design, how much (approximately) will the park cost? Will there be any fences? Will the trails continue along the road right-of-ways (e.g. Arden Street, Sandburg Street)? If not, what will be there instead?

At this point, we have not gone into the scoping phase for this park. At the July 24th Public Hearing, Irish Grandfield, Senior Park Planner, responded to this question. His comments were as follows:

- There are no firm costs until the Master Plan is passed and the project goes into the site development process. A playground typically costs between \$40,000 and \$80,000. A basketball court typically costs around \$40,000. The overall costs depend upon the phasing of the project – i.e., if everything is done at once, or if it is broken down into smaller priorities.
- As far as the trails go, we can only control our land, but ideally we would like a full through-trail system. We could connect to existing sidewalks around the cul-de-sac at Arden Street with permission from VDOT. The Supervisor and VDOT can look at connections near Gallows Road.
- Generally, the Park Authority does not fence the parks, as they are for public use. The Park Authority does fence in instances of a hazard in order to protect people.

There has been much discussion tonight about teenagers and the mischief they cause. What are the plans for use of the park for children over the age of ten, say 10-18 years old?

Will the park include any elements that are likely to attract skateboarders or will the design discourage this? Also, will it be possible to ride bikes through the park?

Again, at the July 24th Public hearing, Irish Grandfield, Senior Park Planner, responded to this question. His comments were as follows:

- What is shown on the playground is generally for children ages 2-12. The basketball/multi-purpose court could be used for older children as well as adults. Trail use could also be considered something all ages could enjoy.
- The trail is recommended to be a natural surface, unless maintenance or safety issues dictate otherwise. This surface tends to discourage skateboarders. Bicyclists could use the trail.

Will there be park crosswalks (brick or other material) on Arden, 4th and Sandburg Streets?

The sidewalk in Section B does not go all the way through. Does the plan contemplate finishing off the last 1/8 of the sidewalk section?

Is there a way to request VDOT to allow the use of the portion of street connecting Sections B and C so as to create a seamless connection between the two areas? Currently that section is covered with vegetation and does not have roadway going through.

Again, at the July 24th Public hearing, Irish Grandfield, Senior Park Planner, responded to this question. His comments were as follows:

- The request for additional use along the right-of-ways is outside the scope of the Park Authority. VDOT could work with the Supervisor's office with that issue, as well as any signage issues the community deems necessary.
- The right-of-way is recorded only. The Park Authority is not implying the roads will ever go through or will be used in that manner.

Questions collected after adjournment of the Public Hearing:

Under the current land development, Parcel A is not a constant 30' in width. By Arden Road, it is presently as little as 8-10 feet wide. How does the current master plan take this actual geography into account?

The conceptual development plan was created using legal parcels delineated by the County, not the edge of pavement or other methods. The Park Authority does not legally have access to VDOT right-of-ways. There is the potential to use the sidewalk constructed around the Arden Street cul-de-sac as a connection through Parcel A to allow the trail to travel the narrowest part of the park. Actual site design of the park will take place during the development stages, not the

Master Planning stage. Please see the earlier question regarding schedules and funding for a more detailed explanation.

*Will we need a community volunteer program to monitor the park?
Will there be grills or a barbeque pit? This is a fire hazard.*

While the Park Authority will be monitoring the site at least weekly, there are no plans to have the Park Authority organize a safety volunteer program. Captain Graham McGowan of the McLean Police District has reviewed the draft Master Plan as well as reviewed any recently reported crimes in the area. He has found nothing in the draft Master Plan that would impede upon the already-safe nature of the neighborhood. If there is an interest in coordinating a community volunteer program to monitor the park for safety purposes, this can be coordinated through the Police Department. More information on this subject can be found at http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/cmtty_pol.htm

There are no plans to include a barbeque pit or other grills within the park. They tend to be a high-maintenance issue and are not necessary in an area with single-family homes and townhouses that allow grills.